

Collaboration Gets a Whole New Meaning: Music: 'Teleconcert' will ...

JOSEF WOODARD SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Los Angeles Times (1923-1995); Nov 11, 1994; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times
pg. OCF15

Collaboration Gets a Whole New Meaning

■ **Music:** "Teleconcert" will electronically link performers in Santa Monica, New York and New Mexico Saturday.

By JOSEF WOODARD
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Long before the Internet became a household word to be feared and respected, multimedia artists and techno-pioneers were busy trying to connect the dots. In the past, such wide-eyed experimentalists have been the recipients of polite tolerance, if not outright sneers. No one is laughing anymore.

Interactive collaboration is the bottom line with Saturday night's "Teleconcert," a project of CalArts being presented locally at the Electronic Cafe International in Santa Monica at 7 p.m. Simultaneously, performers at the Kitchen, a New York performance space, and at Studio X in Santa Fe, N.M., will be linked electronically to create a real-time, tri-city concert.

The event's co-organizer, David Rosenboom, is dean of music at CalArts, and he spoke last week from his office on campus. Books, assorted electronic gadgetry and a grand piano were strewn about the large room, and he apologized for its cluttered appearance.

In part, the disarray can be explained by the Valencia-based school's upheaval in last January's earthquake, which necessitated moving operations elsewhere until just before the current school year began. Yet clutter appears also to be characteristic of Rosenboom, a gifted pianist as well as a composer, software creator and pedagogue with an eye on interactivity.



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Morton Subotnick will perform part of his "Angel Concerto."

This project, Rosenboom asserted, is not really new, however advanced it may seem to more conventional music audiences. "Experiments with telecommunications in the arts go back a long way, at least into the '60s and beyond," he said, including the work of his pioneering CalArts colleague Morton Subotnick. "Now, the technology is beginning to make some of the dreams possible, but many of the dreams are very old."

The upcoming performance will be the most elaborate but hardly the first public display of the kind of work going on at CalArts' Center for Experiments in Art, Information and Technology, as well as at other institutions around the world. Several of these events have taken place at the Electronic Cafe, with electronic tentacles to

other sites.

This Saturday, Subotnick will perform part of his work-in-progress, "Angel Concerto." He will be stationed in Santa Monica, and the motions of his body, hooked up to sensors, will be transformed into signals that will then trigger an instrument in New York.

Rosenboom will be one element in a four-part loop in which his performance on a Yamaha Disklavier—a digitally controlled piano—will prompt the playing of another instrument in New York. There, pianist J.B. Floyd will also be sending back digital info that will, in turn, trigger music in Santa Monica. Rosenboom said, "I will use software I've created that will listen to the three of us playing and create responses. We'll build up to a more wild and rich musical experiment."

Trumpeter Leo Smith, another CalArts-based musician, will be in

New York, lending his improvisational input to the mix. In addition, computer graphic specialist Eric Martin, also a CalArts faculty member, will narrate the proceedings.

Rosenboom is not one to shy away from the constantly evolving state of technology available to musicians. He speculated that "certain kinds of artworks could just live out there in this space. That allows for the idea of collective participation and contribution to a work where the thing itself loses its particular attachment to an individual but yet becomes an organic thing that evolves.

"I think the arts are the most alive when we have a healthy experimental community and sphere of activity going on. I'm optimistic that we're entering a new era of experimental thinking."

■ *Electronic Cafe International, 1649 18th St., Santa Monica, Saturday at 7 p.m. (310) 828-8732. Free.*